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0 251529Z SEP 69

FM RADM BARDSHAR J3 OJCS TDY MACV SAIGON

TO GEN WHEELER CJCS WASH DC

INFO ADM MCCAIN CINCPAC HAWAII

GEN ABRAMS COMUSMACV SAIGON

T O P S E C R E T SENSITIVE MAC 12563 EYES ONLY

FOR GEN WHEELER INFO ADM MCCAIN AND GEN ABRAMS FROM BARDSHAR.

SUBJECT: CONDUCTING CROSS-BORDER OPERATIONS INTO THE DMZ AND NORTH VIETNAM (PRUNING KNIFE) (TS)

A. MACV OUT 12497/DTG 240925Z SEP 69.

1. AS INDICATED IN PARA 1 OF REFERENCE, FOLLOWING IS A SYNOPSIS OF A PROPOSAL FOR CONDUCTING GROUND OPERATIONS BY FREE WORLD FORCES INTO THE DMZ AND NORTH VIETNAM:

QUOTE

PLAN FOR CONDUCTING CROSS-BORDER OPERATIONS INTO THE DMZ AND NORTH VIETNAM

1. THIS IS AN OUTLINE PLAN FOR CONDUCTING GROUND OPERATIONS BY FREE WORLD FORCES INTO THE DMZ AND NORTH VIETNAM.

ENEMY SITUATION

2. NVA FORCES CONTINUE THEIR PRESENCE IN FORCE IMMEDIATELY SOUTH OF THE DMZ, IN THE DMZ ITSELF, AND NORTH OF THE DMZ. THESE FORCES PRESENT A SUBSTANTIAL THREAT TO FREE WORLD FORCES IN NORTHERN I CORPS TACTICAL ZONE (CTZ). IN THE AREA, THE ENEMY HAS PREPARED EXTENSIVE FORTIFICATIONS, STRONG POINTS, BUNKERS, AND STORAGE SITES/SUPPLY STOCKPILES. THE EXACT COMPOSITION AND DISPOSITION OF ENEMY UNITS VARIES WITH THE DISPERSAL AND DEPLOYMENT OF NVA MANEUVER BATTALIONS.

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AT TIMES AN ENTIRE REGIMENT OR DIVISION WITH ITS COMPONENT HEADQUARTERS HAS CONDUCTED OPERATIONS IN SVN, WHILE AT OTHER TIMES ONLY SUBORDINATE ELEMENTS WERE COMMITTED.

3. NORMAL DISPOSITION, IN ADDITION TO HEADQUARTERS, B-5 FRONT, IS 15 MANEUVER AND 5 ARTILLERY BATTALIONS. ELEMENTS OF 2 AA BATTALIONS ALSO NORMALLY OPERATE IN THE AREA. THE ENEMY CAN REINFORCE THESE UNITS WITH 12 ADDITIONAL MANEUVER BATTALIONS IN FROM 1 TO 12 DAYS. THE 5 ARTILLERY BATTALIONS POSE A DIRECT AND CONSTANT STANDOFF THREAT TO FREE WORLD FORCES IN NORTHERN I CTZ. THE PRINCIPAL THREAT IS THE 130MM FIELD GUN WITH A RANGE OF 15KM; OTHER WEAPONS INCLUDE 75/85MM HOWITZERS, 120MM MORTARS, AND 122/140MM ROCKETS.

4. THE NVA CONDUCTS INTENSIVE RECONNAISSANCE IN THE DMZ SOUTH OF THE BEN HAI RIVER. THIS LARGELY DENIES THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE TO FREE WORLD FORCES CONDUCTING OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS IN NORTHERN I CTZ.

OFFENSIVE GROUND OPERATIONS

5. GROUND OPERATIONS INTO THE DMZ WILL BE CONDUCTED AT THE DIRECTION OF CONSTABACV IN COORDINATION WITH RVNAF. SUCH OPERATIONS ARE NORMALLY LIMITED IN SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES.

A. OPERATIONS IN THE DMZ SOUTH OF THE PHIL. OBJECTIVE: TO PROVIDE A SECURITY SCREEN THAT WILL ENSURE THE ENEMY DOES NOT BUILD UP A THREAT AGAINST FRIENDLY FORCES IN I CTZ.

B. OPERATIONS THROUGHOUT THE DMZ. OBJECTIVES: TO ENSURE THE NEUTRALITY OF THE DMZ AND TO DENY NVN DE FACTO CONTROL OF ANY PART OF THE DMZ.

C. INTO NVN UP TO 25 KILOMETERS IN DEPTH. OBJECTIVES: TO EXPLOIT ANY ENEMY REVERSES AS A RESULT OF THE EVOLVING TACTICAL SITUATION AND TO DESTROY FORTIFICATIONS, BASE AREAS, AND SUPPLIES. OPERATIONS INTO NVN WILL BE CONDUCTED IN CONJUNCTION WITH B-52 STRIKES, TACTICAL

AIR AND NAVAL GUNFIRE.

6. THESE GROUND OPERATIONS WOULD FURTHER REDUCE THE THREAT BY PINNING DOWN ADDITIONAL SECURITY FORCES FOR DEFENSE OF HITHERTO SAFE AREAS. THIS IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT IN VIEW OF THE CURRENT REDUCTION OF FORCE LEVELS IN I CTZ. THIS REDUCTION SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCES FREE WORLD FORCES CAPABILITIES IN THAT ZONE.

CONCLUSION

7. GROUND OPERATIONS INTO THE DMZ AND NVN WILL HAVE A DECIDED PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT ON THE ENEMY BY DEMONSTRATING THAT THEY ARE NO LONGER FREE TO OPERATE AT WILL IN THE DMZ AND THAT INCURSIONS MAY BE MADE INTO NVN TERRITORY AT ANY TIME. IN ADDITION, DESTRUCTION OF DEFENSIVE POSITIONS AND SUPPLY STOCKPILES WILL IMPAIR THE ENEMY'S CAPABILITIES TO MOUNT OFFENSIVE AND RECONNAISSANCE OPERATIONS.

END OF PLAN

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